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Council Policy

COVID-19 Return-to-Work Safety Policy

Approval Date: July 20, 2020
 Resolution No.: R167/20/07/20
 Rescinded: N/A

Contact Department: Corporate Services

Purpose

To provide guidance for employees returning back to work during the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including exempt staff and Council, CUPE and GFFR members, committee members and volunteers.

Policy Statements

Principles

1. STAYING INFORMED

- a) Employees are encouraged to stay up-to-date and informed on the pandemic and follow public health advice, as information may change from time to time. Links can be found in the Related Publications section of this document.

2. SELF MONITORING:

- a) Pre-mitigation, including reporting and self-screening, will help to identify possible COVID-19 positive employees and proactively remove risks that they could inadvertently introduce coronavirus into the workplace.
- b) Employees with COVID-19 symptoms must stay home and not come to work for at least ten (10) days, or longer if symptoms have not resolved. As per Healthline BC, after your ten (10) to fourteen (14) day self-isolation, you may return to your regular activities if:
 - i. At least ten (10) days have passed since any symptoms started, and
 - ii. Your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (i.e. Tylenol, Advil), and
 - iii. You are feeling better (there is improvement in runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue). Coughing may go on for several weeks, so a cough alone does not mean you need to continue to self-monitor and self-isolate, or
 - iv. You were self-monitoring and never developed any symptoms.
- c) Employees must also stay at home when sick to avoid spreading illness to others, even if symptoms are not consistent with COVID-19, as you may be non-symptomatic.

3. PHYSICAL DISTANCING:

- a) Physical distancing reduces the potential of coronavirus being transmitted through airborne droplets. There is a possibility that even non-symptomatic carriers of coronavirus may transmit the virus in this manner, so physical distancing should always be observed, even in cases when people do not display symptoms of COVID-19.
- b) Access to meeting rooms should be limited and alternative methods, such as video or conference calls, be used for conducting business to prevent close personal contact
- c) Lunchrooms, break rooms, boardroom, reception and common areas will be arranged to follow physical distancing practices. However, employees are discouraged from using these areas whenever possible.
- d) Employees should remain in their primary work area and not visit other work areas in the building unless absolutely necessary.

- e) Whenever possible, employees should travel alone in vehicles to ensure physical distancing.
- f) Should a task require close personal contact, appropriate PPE and additional mitigation measures should be considered and discussed with your manager.
- g) Only essential business travel should be considered until further notice.
- h) If there are cases where, in a shared workspace, physical distancing cannot be maintained, a more comprehensive risk assessment should be undertaken in collaboration with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). Consideration should be given to the type of task(s), and whether there are alternatives

4. PERSONAL HYGIENE

- a) Employees should practice proper “hand hygiene” techniques often, as it is the single-most effective way of reducing the spread of infection.
- b) Proper respiratory etiquette should also be followed.
- c) Touching your face, including eyes, nose or mouth should be avoided and hands washed or sanitized following such touching.

5. ENHANCED CLEANING/DISINFECTING:

- a) Employees should disinfect common areas and other high touch surfaces before use.
- b) Employees should ensure regularly touched surfaces are disinfected frequently within their own workspace(s).

Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the *Safe Work Procedure – Pandemic Response*.

6. SHARED WORKSPACES/EQUIPMENT INCLUDING VEHICLES:

- a) Employees are discouraged from sharing equipment (i.e. pens, phones, other tools).
- b) The need to share workspaces and equipment will be minimized.
- c) When it is necessary to use a common workstation or piece of equipment, such as photocopiers or cash registers, the surface should be disinfected before and after use. If you are in doubt about the cleanliness of an area or item, employees are encouraged to disinfect the area or item before and after use to reduce the risk of contamination.
- d) In the event of a potential COVID case in a shared workspace, workstation or with a person using shared equipment, the station/equipment should not be used until a deep clean can be performed which is to be delegated by the employee's manager. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the *Safe Work Procedure – Pandemic Response*. Employees affected by the deep clean will be accommodated to ensure safety during the cleaning period, which will be delegated by your manager.
- e) Limit the exchange of papers. If documents must be exchanged, follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the *Safe Work Procedure – Pandemic Response*.
- f) Employees who use municipal vehicles must ensure that high contact surfaces within the vehicle are routinely disinfected. Follow the proper procedural guidelines outlined in the *Safe Work Procedure – Pandemic Response*.

7. PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- a) Facial masks and gloves are not mandatory. Facial masks have been recommended for essential health service workers only. If an employee chooses to use a facial mask, they are responsible for supplying their own, for proper disposal or frequent cleaning of them, dependent on which type they choose to utilize.
- b) Gloves will be provided and while gloves may provide protection for your hands, they do not prevent of the transfer of coronavirus to other surfaces. Frequent hand washing is mandatory even when wearing gloves.

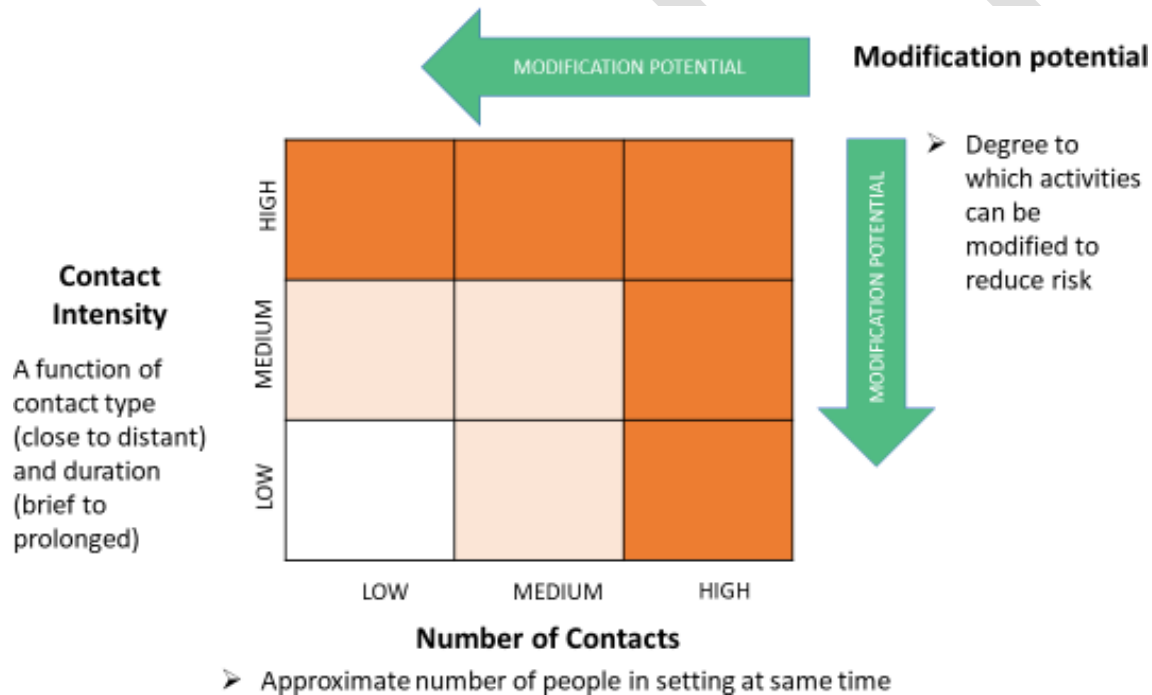
- c) GFFR members will adhere to PPE requirements as specified by BCEHS and shall include fit-tested N95 mask, face shield, and nitrile gloves at a minimum. If COVID-19 symptoms are present, responders shall also wear a non-permeable gown in addition to N95 mask, face shield, and nitrile gloves. Proper PPE donning and doffing procedures, and disposal of PPE shall be followed.

8. STRESS/ANXIETY/MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

- a) Practice self-care. emotional stress, anxiety or concern is natural under the present circumstances. Anyone who feels they are experiencing negative mental health implications should seek assistance as soon as possible.

Risk Matrix:

The risk of transmission in organizational settings and public institutions is subject to two variables that we need to modify to reduce transmission risk: contact intensity (how close you are to someone and for how long); number of contacts (how many people are in the same setting at the same time).



Modifying from high to low can be based on a range of actions:

- Physical distancing measures – to reduce density of people
- Engineering controls – physical barriers, increased ventilation
- Administrative controls – rules and guidelines
- Non-medical masks

Documentation and Training

1. Respective managers will train City Hall and Public Works employees on the policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
2. The Fire Chief, or designate, will train GFFD employees on the policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
3. If employees have any concerns, they may discuss them with their managers or with the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).
4. This Covid-19 Safety Plan will be reviewed at each Management Team meeting and amended accordingly.
5. The Operating Procedure "*City of Grand Forks – COVID-19 Safe Work Procedure*" shall provide guidance to all employees regarding minimizing risk, and shall be updated periodically by Staff as conditions evolve. The City shall take direction from Provincial and Regional Health Authorities.

Employees who have concerns with returning to work (i.e. family care, setup of office equipment or may require some other form of accommodation) should contact their manager immediately to discuss return to work options.

Resolutions and Amendments

20 July 2020 – R167/20/07/20 – Council Policy 618 Established